



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release
Photos available

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What: *From the Village*, Portland Taiko's spring concert

Who: Portland Taiko, Asian American Drum Performance; guest artists Hanayui with Kaoru Watanabe.

When: Friday, March 14, 8pm; Saturday, March 15, 2pm & 8pm. Post-show talk back following the March 15 evening performance.

Where: Winningstad Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, 1111 SW Broadway, Portland

Tickets: Adults \$24.50, Seniors 62+ & Students \$18.50
PCPA Box Office M-F 9am-5pm, TicketMaster, 503-790-ARTS (2787), or
www.portlandtaiko.org. For discounted group and season tickets contact Portland Taiko 503-288-2456 or www.portlandtaiko.org

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GUEST ARTISTS FROM JAPAN JOIN PORTLAND TAIKO FOR *FROM THE VILLAGE*

Internationally acclaimed artists Hanayui with Kaoru Watanabe join Portland Taiko to present *From the Village*, for the Asian American drum performance group's annual spring concert. The concert premieres Friday, March 14 at 8pm and continues Saturday, March 15 at 2pm and 8pm at the Winningstad Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts. Advance tickets are on sale now.

Hanayui hails from one of the cradles of Japanese taiko, Sado Island, also home to Kodo, the world famous taiko ensemble. Kodo's spectacular sister company -- principal dancer Chieko Kojima, breathtaking singer Yoko Fujimoto, and Okinawan dance master Mitsue Kinjo -- team up with fue player and former artistic director of Kodo's Earth Celebration, Kaoru Watanabe for this rare appearance in Portland.

Hanayui grew as an offshoot of Kodo in 1991 when founding members Fujimoto and Kojima envisioned a more intimate atmosphere of folk dance and song with the taiko drum as accompaniment. Together with Okinawan dance expert Kinjo, this trio has captivated audiences from local community centers to concert halls around the world with their enlivening interpretation of folk dances, vibrant percussive sounds and hauntingly beautiful songs.

Asian American
Drum Performance

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The Japanese word "hana" means "flower" and symbolizes the youthful energy that Hanayui puts into their performances. The word "yui" recalls the relationships formed in village Japan when one family did not have enough members to plant its rice or replace its thatched roof and neighbors or other friendly parties came along to help them. What bound the villagers together was the spirit of "yui."

According to Portland Taiko Artistic Co-Director Michelle Fujii, "We plan a playful, lighthearted; program as a whole. Hanayui has that kind of character, and Portland Taiko will complement them with similar energy. Portland Taiko and Hanayui will bridge our artistic influences into one concert."

Portland Taiko's portion of the program includes the title work, *From the Village*, inspired by the local group's study tour to Japan in 2001, when PT members visited and studied with members of Hanayui. PT members were deeply moved by the group, the beautiful surroundings of Sado Island, and the spirit of the taiko community there. The song includes *Machide*, a traditional children's song. Hanayui will join Portland Taiko to perform it together.

Another highlight of the concert will be Portland Taiko's *Handa Na Kayo*, Tagalog for "Are you ready?" an exciting full group taiko piece filled with the joy of playing together. The players answer the call of "Handa na kayo" with "Tatakimasho!!!" Japanese for "Let's play together!"

Following the evening performance March 15, Hanayui and Portland Taiko performers will join the audience in post-show talk back, in the first of Portland Taiko's popular Behind-the-Scenes events.

Advance tickets for *From the Village* are available at the PCPA Box Office, www.portlandtaiko.org or 503-790-ARTS.

From the Village is the first concert of Portland Taiko's 2008 Season, *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors*, in which the heartbeat of the drum calls the community together, reawakening the spirits of the living, and echoing the heartbeat of our ancestors. "In the Japanese and Japanese American traditions of Bon Odori, everyone is welcome to join the folk dances in the annual celebration of Obon, and Portland Taiko extends an invitation to the Portland community to join us in the dance," says Fujii.

The 2008 season also includes the annual fall concert, *In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors* September 19-21, featuring guest artist Shohei Kikuchi; a children's matinee, *Little Feet, Big Drums!*, September 20; plus two more Behind-the-Scenes events this summer. Season tickets are still on sale for \$70. Patron Season tickets, which include special recognition, a backstage tour of the Newmark Theatre, and a special reception at the fall concert are \$145. Call (503) 288-2546 for further information or visit www.portlandtaiko.org.

From the Village is supported by grants from the Japan Foundation – Los Angeles and the Kinsman Foundation. Portland Taiko has received additional season support from Performing Arts Japan, the Japan Foundation; MAP Fund, Creative Capital; The Japan-United States Friendship Commission; and operating support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Oregon Arts Commission, Regional Arts & Culture Council, Work for Art, and Oregon Cultural Trust.

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